## What is claimed is:

- 1. A method of providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:
- (a) maintaining at a permission web server a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user;
- (b) providing access to the first permission to a second user upon said second user authenticating to said permission web server;
- (c) providing the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server;
- (d) receiving at the service web server from said second user a request to access the service;
  - (e) receiving the permission from the second user at the service web server;
- (f) verifying the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and
- (g) providing the second user access to the service if step (f) produces a positive result.
- 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first and second user are the same.
- 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the label comprises a URL for identifying the service.
- 4. A system for providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:

  a permission web server that maintains a first permission, wherein the first permission

  comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user; that provides a

  second user access to the first permission upon the second user authenticating to the permission

  web server; and that provides the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a

permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server; and

the service web server that receives from the second user a request to access the service and the permission; that verifies the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and that provides the second user access to the service if the verification produces a positive result.

- 5. A method of providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:
- (a) maintaining at a permission web server a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user;
- (b) providing access to the first permission to a second user upon said second user authenticating to said permission web server;
- (c) providing the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server;
- (d) receiving at the service web server from a subsequent user a request to access the service, the subsequent user having been delegated a subsequent permission comprising the permission;
- (e) receiving the subsequent permission from the subsequent user at the service web server;
- (f) verifying at least the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and
- (g) providing the subsequent user access to the service if step (f) produces a positive result.
- 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the subsequent permission is delegated to the subsequent user via electronic mail.

- 7. The method of claim 5 wherein the subsequent permission is delegated to the subsequent user by a subsequent web server.
- 8. A system for providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:

  a permission web server that maintains a first permission, wherein the first permission

  comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user; that provides a

  second user access to the first permission upon the second user authenticating to the permission

  web server; and that provides to the second user a permission comprising the first permission and

  a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server; and

the service web server that receives from a subsequent user a request to access the service and a subsequent permission, comprising the permission, the subsequent user having been delegated the subsequent permission; that verifies at least the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and that provides the subsequent user access to the service if the verification produces a positive result.